

INT. JANINE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

A student, SHAWN, stands at the front of the classroom juggling three tennis balls. Behind him on the white board the words "SECOND GRADE TALENT SHOW" are written in big, blocky letters. JANINE and MELISSA's combined students sit in front of him. Janine and Melissa sit at the back of the classroom.

Shawn drops one of his balls and it rolls to the back of the classroom, where Janine picks it up and throws it back to Shawn. It hits him square in the face. Everyone winces.

He ends his routine there and takes a bow. The students, Janine, and Melissa clap enthusiastically.

JANINE

Awesome job, Shawn! That is such a cool talent!

(looking at a clipboard)

Alright, and last on our talent show sign up here we have... Danielle, who will be singing "Out Tonight" from RENT? I've never heard of that song before, it sounds like a lot of fun!

Melissa starts to say something before biting her tongue.

A second grader from Melissa's class, DANIELLE, rises from her seat on the ground and plugs her phone into an AUX cord on Janine's desk. The opening strains of "Out Tonight" begin to play.

DANIELLE

(singing under her breath, very quiet)

What's the time?
Cause it's gotta be close to midnight.

Janine and the students strain to hear her. Janine flashes Danielle a big 'thumbs up!' Melissa snickers.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(a little louder)

My body's talking to me,
It says "Time for danger."

Janine's eyebrows start to raise. Melissa is listening more intently - she's really good. Danielle is beginning to sweat.

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DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(louder, but
panicking)

It says "I wanna commit a crime,
Wanna be the cause of a fight.
Wanna put on a tight skirt,
And flirt, with a stranger."

Oh God. Janine rushes from her seat to shut off the backing track, but the damage has been done. The kids are giggling, Melissa is incredulous, and Danielle is smiling softly.

As she gets them to settle down, a student, CASEY, raises his hand.

CASEY

Miss Janine, what does "my body is
talking to me" mean?

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

JACOB finds Janine as she exits her classroom. He's holding a crumpled flyer in his hands. It reads:

THE LABELLE ARTS FOUNDATION IS LOOKING TO GRANT \$5,000 TO PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH UNDERFUNDED ARTS PROGRAMS. APPLY AT EMAIL BELOW:
labellearts@foundation.com

JACOB

Janine! Ava was just telling me about your totally genius idea to put up a play here to get funding from the LaBelle Foundation, and I wanted to let you know that I am *totally* down to help.

JANINE

For real?

JACOB

Oh, I am in my element here. I once helped direct a production of Lil' Chicago at a summer camp I worked at, so you know I can handle anything you throw at me.

Janine is weighing her options. Neither of them are without their cons.

JANINE

... I *am* going need a lot of help to get this thing going. Let's do it.

JACOB

Perfect! We'll start casting after school today. Have you picked a show yet?

JANINE

Not yet, but I was browsing this online catalogue -

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JACOB

No need. I wrote this experimental play in college, it shouldn't be too hard to stage, but it will demand a lot of stunt work and a real joie de vivre from the actors...

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As Jacob's talking fades out, Janine gives the camera a long-suffering look.

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INT. BREAKROOM - LATER

Barbara and Melissa are sitting together, having a much-needed before-school coffee.

MELISSA

So Barb, I've actually got some big news to tell you.

BARBARA

Oh?

MELISSA

You remember Vince? ...Vending Machine Man?

Barbara nods.

MELISSA

Well, you know we've been going out for a while now, nothing too serious, but... he might be moving into mine sometime soon.

Barbara tries to suppress her horror.

BARBARA

Oh?

BARBARA TALKING HEAD

BARBARA

No. Absolutely not. I know Melissa is an independent woman, free love and all of that hippie mess, but the fact remains that cohabitation before marriage is a sin.

INT. BREAKROOM - CONTINUE FROM ABOVE

BARBARA

Are you sure that's a good idea?
You haven't been together all that long.

MELISSA

Well, he told me that the end of his lease is coming up, and you know, it might be fun to live with someone for a change.

BARBARA

Have you seen his place before?

MELISSA

He says the elevator is broken and he doesn't want me walking up so many stairs. He's a considerate guy.

INT. GREGORY'S CLASSROOM - LATER

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GREGORY'S STUDENTS are competing in a high-stakes in-class spelling bee.

GREGORY

Rebecca, spell "glamorous".

REBECCA

G-l-a-m-o-u-r-o-u-s. I learned that one from Fergie.

Before Gregory can say anything else, his classroom door opens, and a student, ASHA enters.

GREGORY

Asha! Are you feeling any better?

ASHA

Not really.

She turns slightly, and we see that there are three leeches attached to the back of her arm. Gregory's eyes almost pop out of his head.

GREGORY

Everyone, sit down, take five minutes to review your spelling words.

He quickly escorts Asha into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He kneels down next to her and begins to ease the leeches off.

GREGORY

Asha, where did you get those things on your arm?

ASHA

When I went to the nurse's office, Mr. Johnson was there and he said they would suck all of the bad blood out of me, and then my headache would go away and I'd feel better.

Horror sets over Gregory's face.

INT. BREAKROOM - LATER

Barbara and Melissa are in the breakroom eating lunch. Melissa is only sipping on a bottle of water. *

VINCE

(entering)

Melissa, you in here?

MELISSA

Vince! I didn't think you were in today!

They embrace.

VINCE

I grabbed you a little extra something while I was out - one cheesesteak, extra onions, and no bell peppers because they're "an affront to God".

MELISSA

Oh, you know me too well.

She kisses him on the cheek. The bell rings.

Melissa and Vince exit the breakroom. In his wake, Barbara discovers that Vince has left behind the lockbox he uses to carry the coins from the machines.

Furtively, she takes the box in hand and pops it open - it wasn't locked. Interesting.

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Inside, all of the coins are mixed together. Pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, with no respect for denomination or size. Barbara's strategy clicks into place.

BARBARA TALKING HEAD

BARBARA

So as it turns out, he's a slob.
Of course, I also happen to know
that Melissa can't *stand* messes.
(smiling)

The Lord works in mysterious ways.

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INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - LATER

Gregory talks with MR. JOHNSON as he sits at the nurse's desk. The office looks suspiciously empty of supplies.

GREGORY

So you do know the standard
treatment for a headache is a
couple ibuprofen, right?

MR. JOHNSON

Mr. Eddie, do you expect me to
poison these children with a Big
Pharma cocktail? No, no, I'm
cleaning up this office while
Nurse Renée is away. We're getting
these kids healthy, not turning
them into mindless sheep. That's
why I picked up the leeches and
this bloodletting kit. Got a great
deal on it from one of Melissa's
guys.

Gregory turns white.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Janine posts a colorful piece of paper on the wall and
tapes a pencil on a string next to it. It reads:

THE WARLOCK OF IZ: A NEW MUSICAL, BY JACOB HILL. AN
EXPERIMENTAL AND SURREALIST LOOK INTO THE WORKS OF L.
FRANK BAUM. AUDITION SIGN UPS BELOW.

The tape holding the pencil falls off of the wall. Janine
re-sticks it. It falls again. She sticks it back again.
It falls again. She leaves it on the floor.

JANINE TALKING HEAD - INTERCUT WITH ABOVE

JANINE

Casting starts today! Yay!

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Janine and Jacob sit behind a folding table, a copy of the audition sign ups and a gigantic binder packed with papers laid in front of them - this is Jacob's script. Jacob is wearing a jaunty black beret.

The gymnasium's stage is filled with a line up of children, all ready to perform, *A Chorus Line* style. Danielle stands at the very far end of the line.

JANINE

Alright everyone, thank you so much for coming to auditions! Jacob and I are really excited to see what you guys have to share - but there's no pressure. Just do your best!

JACOB

We want to see your very best. Don't disappoint.

Janine elbows him.

JANINE

So, who wants to go first?

AUDITION MONTAGE:

- A kindergartner mumbles her way through a shy rendition of the ABCs.
- A fourth grader raps Angelica's verse in "Satisfied" at full speed, but trips over the words more than a few times.
- A third grader clutches a piece of paper and reads the infamous "I Ate The Divorce Papers" monologue. Jacob frantically writes notes in his binder as Janine cheers the student on.
- A second grader begins to sing "On My Own" from *Les Miserables* but forgets the words a third of the way in.
- A first grader sings a very, very breathy and gasping rendition of "When Will My Life Begin" from *Tangled*.

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- Another fourth grader gets two sentences into Annie's "I am your mother" monologue from Hereditary before Jacob frantically cuts her off.

END MONTAGE

INT. GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

Janine sees Jacob's mini-freakout over the monologue and steps in.

JANINE

Good job, everyone. We're gonna take a short break for water and then we'll get right back to it.

The kids file out of the room. As soon as they leave, Janine and Jacob lock eyes with each other, sharing an uneasy smile and a simultaneous "Oh sh*t" moment.

END OF ACT ONE